PHOTOGRAPIHC DOCUMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT IN MELASMA IN DARKER SKIN USING A 4% HYDROQUINONE SKIN CARE SYSTEM PLUS 0.025% TRETINOIN CREAM

INTRODUCTION
Melasma can be associated with significant psychosocial sequela and is often underdiagnosed even though effective treatment can improve patients’ quality of life. A study has been performed to evaluate the efficacy and tolerability of using a 4% hydroquinone skin care system plus tretinoin 0.025% cream to treat mild or moderate melasma in darker skin. The results from the study showed that, as early as week 4, this treatment can significantly reduce the severity of melasma and the intensity of melasma pigmentation, and can improve various measures of quality of life. Furthermore, the treatment is well tolerated and is associated with a high level of patient satisfaction.

When data from this study have been disseminated previously, space limitations have precluded the inclusion of many photographs. However, particularly when evaluating treatments in skin of color, it is useful to visualize the clinical changes as well as analyze the data. As a result, this poster is focused on showcasing additional photographs from this study that were not previously shown when the data were originally disseminated.

METHODS
Main inclusion criteria
• Female
• 25-65 years old
• Mild or moderate epidermal melasma
• Minimal to marked intensity of melasma pigmentation
• Cutaneous melasma stable for ≥ 3 months
• Fitzpatrick skin type III-VI

Main exclusion criteria
• Any facial skin condition that might interfere with diagnosis or evaluation
• Allergy or hypersensitivity to sunscreens or ingredients in study products including parabens and aloe
• History of increased pigmentation or contact dermatitis after using hydroquinone or tretinoin
• History of Photosensitivity of Ota
• Depressed or atrophic facial lesions
• Need to use other medicated products on the face during the study
• Need to use other medication that might increase pigmentation
• Fitzpatrick skin type III-VI
• Cutaneous melanosis stable for ≥ 3 months
• Minimal to marked intensity of melasma pigmentation
• Mild or moderate epidermal melasma

RESULTS
Patients
• 20 patients enrolled:
  • 18 (90%) completed all 24 weeks of treatment
  • 2 patients withdrew voluntarily after week 18
• Mean age of 50 years
• 65% Black/African American, 35% white/Caucasian
• Fitzpatrick skin type IV (40%), V (40%), or VI (20%)
• Mean age of 50 years

Photographs
• Rapid improvement in melasma within 4 or 8 weeks of treatment (Figure 1)
• Considerable clinical improvement without inducing other dyspigmentation issues (Figures 1 and 2), even after using treatment for 24 weeks and in the darkest skin type (Figure 2).

CONCLUSION
The photographs from this study demonstrate the rapidity and quality of clinical improvement achievable when using the 4% hydroquinone skin care system plus 0.025% tretinoin cream to treat mild to moderate melasma in darker skin. Considerable clinical improvement can be achieved within 4 or 6 weeks of treatment, with no additional dyspigmentation issues being triggered even after using the treatment for 24 weeks and in patients with the darkest skin type.

REFERENCES
1. Grimes P, Watson J. Treating epidermal melasma with a 4% hydroquinone skin care system plus 0.025% tretinoin cream. Cutis 2013;91:5-12